

NOROVIRUS INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND VISITORS

WHAT IS NOROVIRUS?

Norovirus or Norwalk virus is a frequent cause of diarrhoea and vomiting in the community and is most common during the winter. It is sometimes called 'winter vomiting disease'. It is caused by something called a small round structured virus (SRSV).

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

Norovirus causes symptoms of 'gastric flu'. It lasts 2-3 days and the person will have diarrhoea and/ or vomiting. Some people may have a raised temperature, headaches and aching limbs. The illness is usually mild in nature and gets better without antibiotics. Norovirus does however spread very easily in Care Settings due to the close contact between patients and staff. Large numbers of patients and staff can be involved and it is important to stop the illness from spreading or to relatives and friends.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT ME?

If you do become unwell, you will be asked to remain in your own room until you have been well again for 48 hours. Occasionally you might be moved to another room or to an area with other patients with the same illness.

WILL I NEED TREATMENT?

Antibiotics are not needed to treat Norovirus, the main treatment is making sure you drink plenty of fluid. If you develop diarrhoea and vomiting a stool sample may be sent to the laboratory for testing. Once the illness is over no further action is necessary and your care and treatment will continue as before.

CAN I HAVE VISITORS?

Yes you can have visitors, however they must be warned that you have an infectious type of sickness. Although the symptoms are mild children **should not** come to visit you, as they may be particularly prone to the virus. Friends or relatives that are unwell or suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting themselves should also not visit. If you have any concerns at all about someone visiting, please discuss this with a nurse or Doctor. To prevent the spread of infection your visitors should avoid visiting other areas or care settings after your visit where possible. There are no extra risks in pregnancy for the mother or baby.

DO VISITORS NEED TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS WHEN VISITING ME?

Visitors must wash their hands thoroughly both before and after visiting you. It is also advisable to keep your number of visitors to a minimum. It is best that they do not bring in any food for you whilst you are unwell, to prevent it becoming contaminated. The nursing staff will advise if anything further is necessary.